Greetings Iowa physics faculty and instructors,

My name is Ian Spangenberg and I am acting president of the Iowa Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers (IAAPT) for the 2017 calendar year. Let me start by thanking you for taking the time to open and read through this message during such a busy time of year. I hope your semester and year are off to great starts and that your students are back from their breaks fully energized and ready to learn.

I am beginning my fifth year teaching at Pleasant Valley High School in Bettendorf, Iowa, where I currently teach AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2. I also mentor the high school’s astronomy club by helping the student group to organize weekly meetings and coordinate monthly field trips to observing sites and other astronomy-related activities. You may soon see the name of one of my students in lights as he received 1st place in the AAPT contrived photo contest this last spring.

Using the Modeling Instruction style as a guide, my curriculum and pedagogy are designed around big picture physics. Students derive the equations of motion and interaction from experiment and learn to incorporate principles and ideas into a central coherent model. I just received my Master’s in Science Education from the University of Northern Iowa after completing a three year-long investigation on the effectiveness of my instruction style on AP Physics Exam scores. The investigation yielded positive results and support for my ideas, and I can’t wait to share them with you this fall.

As the only AP Physics teacher and only one of two physics teachers in my building, it can be hard to find a local community of teacher-physicists to bounce ideas off of, compare and contrast styles and methods, or learn about new ideas while staying connected to an ever-evolving field. Thus, I rely on the relationships I have developed with other physics teachers around the country and around the state to continue to engage in my favorite subject.

With this in mind, I want to personally invite you to our annual meeting of the Iowa Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers. The meeting will occur on Saturday, November 4th, 2017, at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. Thank you to John Zwart for agreeing to be our local host this fall! The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and coffee, doughnuts, fruit, and other snacks will be provided. Registration for this meeting is $7 which will help to cover the costs.

The morning sessions will include opening remarks, an update from our chapter representative (Nathan Quarderer, Northeast Community College, Calmar campus), comments from those who attended recent AAPT national conferences, and any other pertinent information from the national AAPT office. The remainder of the time before lunch will consist of presentations. We are currently seeking proposals and abstracts from any of you who might be interested in giving a short (8 min) talk about things that you and your students are doing in the physics classroom. This could be anything from a lab activity that you have designed, research projects you or your students are working on, or something you picked up at another workshop or professional development experience. Anything relevant you can think of that you’d like to share with the broader community of physics teachers in the state of Iowa would be great, and we would love to hear from you. If you are interested in presenting, please submit your abstract to me by October 13, 2017, at spangenbergian@pleasval.k12.ia.us - make sure you get a response from me because my school’s e-mail filter is sometimes the worst. E-mail Nathan Quarderer at quarderern@nicc.edu if you have problems sending me e-mails. Be sure to include any special needs you might have related to technology. PowerPoint and internet access will be available, along with a USB drive. Please supply your own power cords and adapters if you plan on using your own laptop.

Following the presentations, we will eat lunch together. Your response to this invitation will dictate what we end up doing for lunch, so please RSVP to this invitation by Oct. 13th, 2017, so that we can get an idea of our potential headcount. We will update you as to our decision for lunch once we have a better understanding of how many people will be in attendance. This update will also provide further details about the location (building, room, parking, etc.) once those things get ironed out.

After lunch, we will have our annual section board meeting, and hold elections to determine officers for 2018. Section officers in attendance should attend this meeting and participate in elections. This meeting is also open to the general audience and your participation is welcome.

I should mention that presenting is not required (but it is strongly encouraged) and membership to AAPT is also not a prerequisite to attend our state section meeting. If you just want to come, hang out, listen to the presentations, and have some coffee…that is fine! Simply attending this meeting will be an excellent opportunity for you to meet new people, catch up with old friends, and network with other physics teachers from around the state. In a place like Iowa, where we are all so spread out often working in small districts, we have the tendency to feel isolated and alone. Don’t let this happen to you! Please, come say ‘hello’ and introduce yourself. We would love to see you in Sioux Center on November 4.

On behalf of the other members of our section officer team, thank you for taking the time to read this and please consider attending our section meeting. If you know of teachers or scientists in your building, on your campus, or in your community that might benefit from attending this meeting, please feel free to forward our message on to them. We hope to see you all at Dordt College!

Ian Spangenberg

President – AAPT Iowa Section

Pleasant Valley High School

B.S. Science Education ‘13, B.A. Physics ’13, and MA Science Education ‘17

IAAPT Webpage: http://faraday.physics.uiowa.edu

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